

## Executive Summary

On Saturday, June 12, 2004, a group of elected officials, representatives from regional agencies, and community leaders took and others met to take a bus tour of San Pablo Avenue, which is also State Highway 123. The expedition, organized by the Greenbelt Alliance, was part of a regional planning process led by Assemblywoman Loni Hancock designed to re-energize the San Pablo Avenue Corridor through considering incorporating affordable and market rate housing, transit-oriented development, mixed-use development, public art, open space, and vital commercial life with a sense of continuity throughout the corridor. Following the bus tour, participants were asked to complete a survey to share opinions, ideas, and examples of each theme observed on the tour and rank these areas in order of priority. This document summarizes the results and viewpoints of those who completed their survey.<sup>1</sup>

Respondents listed pedestrian-oriented and transit-oriented design as the highest area of focus, followed by economic viability and vitality. Community character and housing were third and fourth choices, respectively, while public amenities were listed as both the fifth and sixth priorities.

Those who completed the survey shared many positive comments about San Pablo Avenue as well as areas needing further development. People consistently noted that Del Norte Place in El Cerrito is a positive example of pedestrian-oriented and transit-oriented design with higher density near public transportation. The city of Emeryville was perceived as including an example of affordable housing designed with character. The Ohlone Greenway, which runs through multiple cities, was considered a positive example of an area with public amenities and services. Several respondents also noted a desire for more open space, and they also wanted work on bus stops to be completed.

Common opinions also emerged regarding community character, community identity, and economic vitality. Sections of San Pablo Avenue in Emeryville and in Berkeley by Dwight Way were highlighted as positive examples of community character and corridor identity defined in part by its art, banners, and trees.

Other respondents voiced interest in design standards between communities to create identity. The area between Dwight Way and University Avenue in Berkeley was consistently noted as an area with economic vitality and locally owned business. Residents noted the new AC Transit bus improved transit mobility but expressed concerns about pedestrian safety.

Survey responders also shared extremely positive feedback regarding the day, its organization, and the depth of its impact for those who attended. As one respondent noted, “This trip has changed the way I look at streets...I...am much more aware of the issues faced by cities, transportation communities, and the general sense of individual communities.”

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<sup>1</sup> Please note that this summary only reflects the feedback from those who completed and returned their surveys, who comprised 33% of those on the bus tour.

**Question 1: Where did you see models of pedestrian- or transit-oriented design?  
Where were there opportunities for improvement?**

<b>Positive examples of pedestrian-oriented, transit oriented design</b>	<b>Opportunities for improvement</b>	<b>Comments</b>
Del Norte Place (x 4 responses)*	Retail hard to see from street being set back behind parking lot	Good example of high density near transportation;* Good ADA access at Del Norte and link to public transit; link to Ohlone Greenway; nice mix of retail and residential
Redevelopment in Emeryville at 40 <sup>th</sup> and San Pablo (x 3)	Needs “traffic calming” at 40 <sup>th</sup> and San Pablo, more aesthetically pleasing, more plants, concern for safety; Larger medians, bus stop unfinished, bulb outs at intersections;	
Solano Ave. in Albany (x 2)	More shaded trees and open-air dining	(Enjoyed) plants and amenities
Fruitvale Transit Village		Continue to share information with elected officials in Richmond and Oakland
Berkeley		Blocks of unified identity
Market and San Pablo	Rapid Transit stops incomplete, not good bike facilities for Ohlone Greenway; Bus stops seem unfinished and seem to lack good and safe character	Not pedestrian friendly in Oakland and Richmond
Vista Senior Apartments		Markets that sold produce on sidewalk generated foot traffic, even in deteriorated areas
Buildings set against sidewalk with parking in the back	Create permeable surfaces to mitigate urban runoff/emissions	

<b>Positive examples of pedestrian-oriented, transit oriented design</b>	<b>Opportunities for improvement</b>	<b>Comments</b>
Dwight St at San Pablo in Berkeley	Larger and consistent medians along corridor, no blocked pedestrian crossings	
Corner of San Pablo Avenue and South Castro Ave. in Albany		“It had everything”
	Improve where Cutting Blvd and San Pablo cross	San Pablo uninviting for pedestrians and bikes- no trees, traffic crosses too fast, lanes are huge, scary to cross
Enhanced crosswalk	Pedestrian safety areas in medians, pedestrian safety lighting	“People who cannot make it across the avenue in one light are probably not safe on any median, planted or not.”
	Make bus steps and sidewalks level to support use by elderly people and those with strollers	
Pedestrian crossings with unique pavement markings	Mid-intersection crossing where space is wide, need incentives for transit-oriented design	

**Question 2: Where did you see models of housing choices?**  
**Opportunities for additional housing choices?**

<b>Positive housing example</b>	<b>Opportunities for improvement</b>	<b>Comments</b>
Emeryville (x 3)		Housing designed with character (e.g. industrial type building materials); (Need housing close to) public transit; Housing needs to remain affordable and a top priority.
El Cerrito/Albany Solano Ave. area mixed use housing		
Albany gardens at Portland and San Pablo		Good looking, 3 stories, commercial ground floor; renting to families and retired folk
	Not many examples for restored historic housing	Good examples of new housing development
Berkeley new housing for students		
Senior housing in San Pablo		Good placement in the street, well designed, near transportation
	Mix types of housing (e.g., senior with other types of housing)	Make sure amenities are included with mixed use housing, i.e. child care, parks, mix types of housing,
	Need more housing for all income groups, especially 2-3 bedroom units for low-income families	
	Need more mixed use and multi-family housing along Oakland corridor	
Many examples in Berkeley	High-density affordable housing, not necessarily huge buildings, even	Add trees, make it “walkable”

	Medium density	
		“San Pablo will never be for anyone, and we couldn’t... make it for everyone.”
	Richmond to Berkeley to encourage more height for housing above retail	
	Future development of high-density housing in Berkeley	

**Question 3: Where did you see positive examples of public amenities and services  
(ex: open space, parks, child care and health care services)?**

**Opportunities for improvement?**

<b>Positive examples of public amenities and services</b>	<b>Opportunities for improvement</b>	<b>Comments</b>
Notes of Ohlone Greenway (x 2)	Need more examples similar to Ohlone Greenway in Emeryville and Oakland; Future development of various amenities and services in Oakland	
“Many” (none specifically listed) (x 2)	(Need more) open space (x 2)	Many areas making progress on amenities like medians, landscaping, street furniture, but still work to be done
		Encourage café open court yard and pedestrian friendly market place, access to transportation
		Include amenities with housing choices, e.g., child care, green space/parks
Proposal by Jubilee to have young adults recently out of foster care		
Fairmont Avenue and El Cerrito Plaza in El Cerrito		
Albany example of open space with thought to retail and services		
	(Need more) community health clinics near corridor, also need benches and shelters not only in areas of higher property value	Even in Richmond, many health clinics not easily accessible, unless it is transit-accessible, “we will lose money and destroy health of communities as people

		avoid preventable care”
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**Question 4: Where were there positive examples of Community character and corridor identity (ex: history, art and culture, street trees, lighting)?**

**Opportunities for improvement?**

<b>Positive examples of community character and corridor identity</b>	<b>Opportunities for improvement</b>	<b>Comments</b>
Emeryville (x 2)		Good art, banners, good lighting, medians, efforts to retain existing buildings, important to save older architecture. Hard to do over long stretches, needs to be in clusters
Dwight area of Berkeley (x 2);		Central stops, great curbside built up to street, trees; most are only one story but nice store fronts
Berkeley/Oakland corner with artisan shops	“Not much different except building type to denote different localities”	Corner was a surprise; Berkeley street trees lend a real sense of place and asset (x 2)
Public art, historical plaques, appropriate street trees	Encourage consistent design standouts between communities would help create identity (x 2)	Some continuity in design/color/ facades, pleasing where exists (x 2) Uniform Rapid stops with shelters helps to create consistency. “It would make sense to have the San Pablo Avenue signs uniform.”
	Need cross-jurisdictional design standards to strengthen city’s negotiation position, parking in rear	(The bars on the windows) “look forbidding and unfriendly even though they are essential”
Old Oakland/Golden Gate Branch library area.	Richmond underpass-need signage designating the various parts of the avenue, also need wayfinding signs	Little or no landscaping with little sidewalk activity, fewer trees, and buildings spread farther apart created an unwelcoming feeling



Positive examples of community character and corridor identity (continued)	Opportunities for improvement	Comments
	Recognize cultural and historical contributions of people along corridor, maintaining relevant characteristics as identified by the community	“The charm of this area is in the variety and differences. If a shopper wants a cookie cutter type of environment, the malls are the place to go.”
North Oakland		More variation than expected between cities, although variation is good, “where it’s lacking, it’s quite bad”
	San Pablo and Cutting needs buffers, street cleaning, trees, affordable housing, benches, lights,	San Pablo and Cutting Blvd area ugly, not enough trees and not enough safety
	“Key issue”	
	More trees in Albany, San Pablo, Oakland, Emeryville	“Little historical preservation except in theatres, can’t answer lighting until taken tour in evening”

**Question 5: Where did you see models of economic viability/vitality (ex: local businesses serving the neighborhood)? Opportunities for improvement?**

<b>Positive examples of economic viability/vitality</b>	<b>Opportunities for improvement</b>	<b>Comments</b>
Berkeley area (x 5)		“Dwight area had local unique businesses surviving despite Emeryville.” “Fun and interesting mix in Berkeley with different retail beyond restaurants, (for example) lighting stores, retro furniture.”
Albany (x 4)	El Cerrito Plaza	“Mom and pop’s provide character and uniqueness. Let’s develop their potential and not focus on more generic chain stores.”
		“Local businesses should be concentrated in nodes to gather a critical mass and be mutually supportive. For example, Dwight Way and S.P.A in Albany.”

<b>Positive examples of economic vitality/viability (continued)</b>	<b>Opportunities for improvement</b>	<b>Comments</b>
Emeryville		Emeryville maximizes economic visibility that their neighbors don't. "Emeryville seems to have the most prominent of commercial issues. Interesting to know they've hired a retail consultant to create a mix of retail uses." "Emeryville is tempering previous excesses. "
Corner of San Pablo and Central in El Cerrito		Good example of reuse of old, tired furniture store into attractive business
	"All of Oakland needs help."	(Although) ... "business taxes and dollars are crucial, I was surprised at how much emphasis there was."
"...having new retailers adjust design standards to be more pedestrian oriented"	There are many local business owners that could use resources for façade improvements.	These locally-owned and locally-serving businesses should be treated and considered assets rather than barriers. "Black Muslim Businesses are good example of local serving business, but needs more help."
	"Some good design guidelines for non-mixed used urban housing is needed." "More emphasis on drains."	"There is just too much land for it all to be retail/mixed use."

Positive examples of economic vitality/viability (continued)	Opportunities for improvement	Comments
	“Promote interaction between residents, visitors, and merchants, recognize alternate transportation, e.g., walking,	“Looks like a lot of small, struggling businesses. Would like to see El Cerrito’s desire for “big box” (Target, Home Depot) versus desire for smart growth.”
		“Add incentives such as City/Redevelopment agency contribution. HIP/TLC program or TLC Smart growth program in CC county.”
	“I’d like to see the smaller, family-owned businesses incentivized to either stay in business or to open up business.”	“It seems that many of the vacant lots that are slated for businesses are actually going to have large big-box type or chain development.”

**Question 6: Where did you find models of corridor mobility (ex: efficient use of transit stops, flow of traffic)? Opportunities for improvement?**

<b>Positive examples of corridor mobility</b>	<b>Opportunities for improvement</b>	<b>Comments</b>
"RAPID bus is great."		"Are RAPID stops well placed? Some local stops too closely spaced, particularly in Berkeley." "Rapid Bus seems to have enhanced a bus rider's trip along SPA in terms of reduced trip time."
	Corridor mobility still an issue in all areas along San Pablo Avenue	
	All way crossings at critical intersections like University and San Pablo and San Pablo and Solano.	Balance between pedestrian safety and amenities and need to have traffic flow smoothly.
		"I-80 is an alternate route for S.P.A., so I think the priority for automobiles should be transferred to pedestrian, bikes, and transit. People driving longer distances should use the interstate."
Emeryville		(Corridor mobility) "seems to be working better now."

<b>Positive examples of corridor mobility (continued)</b>	<b>Opportunities for improvement</b>	<b>Comments</b>
	“Priority for pedestrian safety”	Through Berkeley slower for cars, but better for bikes and pedestrians
“Mobility seemed pretty good today (Saturday) throughout corridor.”	“Need traffic calming”	(Corridor mobility is) hard to know on a Saturday- it can get bad when the freeway is clogged. The bus having to move in and out of the traffic slows it down a lot.
		(Corridor mobility is) critical. “Keep in mind the more urban nature of San Pablo Ave. in the northern cities versus the more rural nature of SPA in Pinole to Crockett.”
	Pedestrian/bikes	“A lot can be done on San Pablo to improve safety, and it’s much needed.”
	Reduce thoroughfares to main freeways in residential areas	“The restaurant was an...example of parking problems.”

**Question 7 \*\*: Knowing that the themes of the tour overlap, please rank them in the order you would like to see them addressed (1 being first, 6 being last).**

Priority themes		Comments
Priority 1	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Pedestrian-oriented /transit-oriented design (x 5)</li> <li>2. Housing (x 4)</li> <li>3. Community character (x 2)</li> <li>4. Economic viability (x 2)</li> <li>5. <u>Other responses</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-corridor mobility</li> <li>-zoning regulations such as Form Based Zoning</li> <li>-commercial development,</li> <li>-increased canopy/buffers along San Pablo</li> </ul> </li> </ol>	Need guidelines to prohibit more parking facing San Pablo
Priority 2	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Economic vitality/viability (x 6)</li> <li>2. Community character (x 3),</li> <li>3. Corridor mobility (x 2)</li> <li>4. <u>Other responses</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Pedestrian usage</li> <li>-Public amenities</li> <li>-Greenery</li> <li>-Design guidelines</li> <li>-Art/culture revitalization</li> <li>-Historic</li> </ul> </li> </ol>	
Priority 3	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Community character (x 3)</li> <li>2. Economic viability (x 3),</li> <li>3. Housing choices/development (x 3)</li> <li>4. Transit/pedestrian-oriented design (x 2)</li> <li>5. <u>Other responses</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Corridor mobility</li> <li>-Housing</li> <li>-Public amenities</li> <li>-Medians with flowers,</li> <li>- Public access to open space</li> </ul> </li> </ol>	

Priority themes (continued)		Comments
Priority 4	1. Housing (x 4) 2. Corridor mobility (x 3) 3. Pedestrian/ transit oriented design (x 3) 4. <u>Other responses</u> -Public amenities -Merchant organization	
Priority 5	1. Public amenities (x 4) 2. Corridor mobility, (x 2) 3. Pedestrian/ transit (x 4) oriented design 4. Housing (x 2) 5. <u>Other responses</u> Historical retention, Economic viability/vitality, Community character, Greenery	“Hold events on San Pablo to promote the avenue.”
Priority 6	1. Public amenities (x 4) 2. Corridor mobility (x 2) 3. Community character/corridor identity, (x 2) <u>Other response</u> Economic viability/vitality	“Corridor mobility as 6 <sup>th</sup> because the Rapid is well underway”



**Question 8: What is your favorite part of San Pablo Avenue? For what reasons?**

<b>What is your favorite part of the avenue?</b>	<b>For what reasons?</b>
Dwight area of Berkeley (x 6)	“Good street trees, nice shops, fewer traffic lanes, just a good feel.” “It has interesting shops, pedestrian scale, dappled shade”. “Interesting shops, organizations, some nice old buildings-- in some cases improved”
Emeryville (x 4)	“Revitalization of the former industrial area to a vital housing and business development.” “Emeryville is doing a very good job of redeveloping the street- it’s quite a turnaround.” “Liked the light poles in Emeryville
Berkeley (x 3) Gilman-Ashby	Mix of uses, commercial and restaurant, interesting, maintaining existing buildings if possible or keeping main features and good signage, street trees for shade and natural beauty. “Berkeley has demonstrated to effective sustainable development. Medians (include) vegetation, tree lined corridors, although corridors lack pedestrian spaces and affordable housing.” “The Berkeley portion with its older buildings being reused.”
El Cerrito (x 2) and Berkeley	“The small pockets in El Cerrito and Berkeley where there are small shops (non-chain) and shade trees.” “El Cerrito near Cerrito Plaza.”
Downtown Pinole (x 2)	“Has the most community character of any part of San Pablo Avenue. The best use of historic buildings interspersed with infill development. New development planed for corner of SPA and Tenant Ave will fill in a key missing piece.” “ Small town feel in Pinole.
Multi-ethnic, multi-use, multi-income	“It’s a mish-mash, and has tremendous potential.”
	“Surprised by the beginning of the ‘International’ corridor in Berkeley.”

<b>What is your favorite part of the avenue?</b>	<b>For what reasons?</b>
El Portal, El Cerrito Theater,	"I like the variety of characters and the pockets of interesting commercial areas and many opportunities for development."
Solano at Albany	
none	San Pablo Avenue is dysfunctional, appears to have no consistent theme or utility. Two blocks of change appear totally different and unrelated.

**Question 9: What else would you like to share with us?**

<b>Positive examples of what you'd like to share?</b>	<b>Opportunities for Improvement</b>	<b>Comments</b>
	"Include reps from the San Pablo Avenue Corridor project that's been underway for many years."	"Key issue is the disconnect between the cities' needs for tax revenue and doing smart growth."
Phil did a very good job this morning.	"Also important to consider good retail design or new mixed-use projects with ground floor retail will not be as successful."	"Think of a way to encourage a model (or two different types of use) development (public and private components) that represents the multiple features and get it done." Possibly model from Fruitvale Village. "Identify what people like and highlight it."
	Duplicate presentation by Erickson (power point,) a bit much, one would do (x 2).	"There are many opportunities to enhance San Pablo Ave. Multiple funding sources need to be identified."
"A wonderful way for different communities to work cooperatively."	Could parking be moved to behind businesses while meeting business needs and moving business up to the sidewalk?	"Very enthused about the SP working group and hope it continues to move forward."
		Invite to Hercules to view key communities' "new urbanism" program.
	"Figure out an approach to auto repair shops to reduce their aggregate street frontage without destroying business."	"Interesting to hear challenges in El Cerrito, working with Caltrans, Richmond, and other agencies. Planning is much more interconnected with neighboring cities."

Positive examples of what you would like to share? (continued)	Opportunities for improvement	Comments
		“Interesting that Richmond and San Pablo, two lower income neighborhoods, promote parking up front in lieu of promoting more public transit so direly necessary for their residents. Let’s make sure future development is more thoughtful.”
		Investigate the potential for some amount of reduced surface-lot parking in exchange for multi-level garages and improved transit and pedestrian/bikeways
		Interested in planning estimates.

**Question 10: Please share your evaluation of today's event.**

Positive/general comments	Areas for improvement
...“This trip has changed the way I look at streets, shops, and vacant lots. I ...am much more aware of the issues faced by cities, transportation communities, storefronts, and the general... sense of the individual communities.”	
Very informative tour (x 2). “Sometimes we become too focused on our own cities, so this was a very good event.”	
“Today’s event was extremely well organized and informative (x 2).” “Thank you!!”	
Overall very good. Good examples of projects and speakers.	Towards the end of the bus trip, people were losing interest in the speaker and lots of small conversations, but that’s what happens.
“Pretty good. Facilitators are knowledgeable.”	
“Great work at kicking off this movement which will hopefully gather momentum! Educational, and nice space for people to come together with different perspectives to talk.	“Hard to hear, which helped people become more chatty. The back had a different view of the landscape than the front, so it was hard to see what to focus on.”
“Impressive logistics carried off extremely well.”	
“Great event, highlighting the need to improve the area along SPA. And seeing current successes and immediate needs.”	
“Contrast between different cities is quite striking.”	
Very, very good job (x 2). Important to understand that whole of SPA to better plan for individual pieces. “Thanks for inviting me.”	
Cities doing interesting things along corridor, but not coordinating with their “neighbors”/adjacent jurisdictions.	
Excellent event/ tour (x 3). Worthwhile for all.	

### **General questions from survey respondents:**

1. What are goals and achievements related to each city's plan for including public amenities and services?
2. Are RAPID stops well placed?
3. Can speed be slower but signals be timed?
4. Aren't we still looking at putting in signals that are sensitive to the RAPID buses, so the bus can be faster?
5. Let's plan for a tour of Pinole, Hercules, Crockett, and Rodeo?
6. (It will be interesting to see) how each city/community will contribute to the revitalization along San Pablo Ave.?
7. Where is higher density planned?
8. How are boundaries between cities being addressed?
9. What are related web-sites?
10. Has anyone looked into a shuttle system from a central parking lot to the different areas of San Pablo?

#### **\* Key**

; indicates comment from new person

, indicates additional comment from same person

x = multiplied by that number of people e.g. (x 2) = 2 of the same responses

**\*\*** Where multiple priorities conflicted or tied in question 7, a tie was eliminated if one of the answers had already been chosen as a higher priority.